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Another Mistake By Fulbright

For a former Rhodes Scholar and the founder of his own program of scholarships for international study, Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas does some mighty strange things.

Under his leadership, the stature of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is at low ebb, and Fulbright—who is after all a learned and courteous man—finds himself paired in the public eye with the blustery and inexplicable Sen. Wayne Morse of Oregon.

With muddled sniping at our conduct in Viet Nam, Fulbright and his colleagues have harmed their country propaganda-wise.

It is one thing to question the wisdom of a policy, but it is quite another to use foggy philosophical meanderings to undermine what is indeed a firm commitment—particularly when the Fulbright clique knows full well that their position is not going to have a major effect in changing that commitment.

But now the Arkansas senator has taken another questionable tack.

During the Foreign Relations Committee's consideration of our foreign aid program, the deliberations were conducted privately.

Certainly if public disclosure of the

discussion would endanger our security or hamper the conduct of sensitive diplomacy, secrecy would be understandable.

But this is not the case.

Fulbright simply declared that the committee's actions were tentative and that public disclosure during the deliberations would subject the senators to public pressure.

Since when are senators supposed to be immune from public pressure?

Since when do they have the privilege of meeting privately to consider public business, simply to avoid justifying their positions to those who may disagree with them?

After all, this is the same Senator Fulbright who has pushed for Foreign Relations Committee representation on the Senate's watchdog committee for the Central Intelligence Agency—a step which he must realize would eliminate some of the vital secrecy with which the CIA must operate, for most politicians (including senators) have some trouble keeping information to themselves.

Fumbling inconsistency on the part of the Arkansas senator is a sad phenomenon in view of his past accomplishments, both as a private citizen and as a public servant.